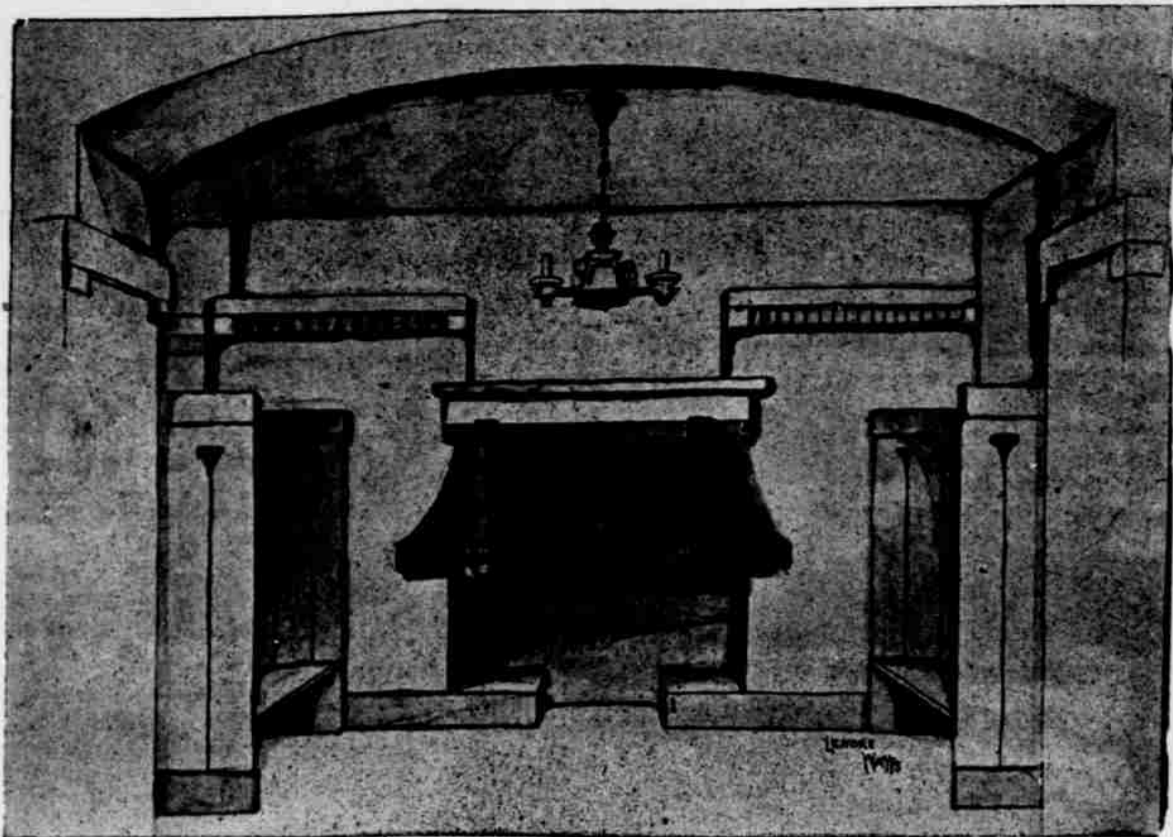


## ATTRACTIVE FIRE PLACE IN THE TAVERN'S LOBBY

TAVERNS AND STAGE LINES  
HERE IN THE EARLY DAYS

In the memories of two of Columbia's oldest citizens there still burn brightly recollections of the times when all the hotels of the city and of the county were taverns,—not only in name but in actuality. William Mattocks, 83 years old, who lives at 1607 East Broadway on what is called Gordon or Fyter Hill, and James C. Gillespie of 15 North Eighth street, were residents of the city when there was no railroad nearer than Jefferson City and when the Wabash only came as near as Mexico.

There was very little in the Columbia of the days of '57 to remind Mr. Mattocks of the prosperous city of today. Columbia at that date claimed a scant 3,000 population and was a city of the most rural type. Everyone in the town knew of the latest arrivals by stage coach and every death and fire was heralded by a ringing of the bell on the court house. Stories of the grandfathers of the best citizens of the city came fluently from the tongues of the two men as they told of the hotels of youthful Columbia and reminisced of the times that are past.

## Hotels In The Early Days.

The history of the hotels of Columbia that the two men gave between them goes back only as far as 1857, the year that Mr. Mattocks came to Columbia with his father from Virginia. The history that came after 1863 was supplemented by Mr. Gillespie. Mr. Gillespie says, and probably rightly, that there is no man in the county that knows more of the history of Columbia or of Boone County, since that time than he.

According to Mr. Mattocks, there were three small hotels when he came here a young man. There were at that time and there have been since many boarding houses and near-hotels of which he makes no mention in his account.

The City Hotel, kept by Tom Selbie, was perhaps the most famous of the time. It stood where the Guitard Building stands today. On the site of the new bank building was another tavern owned by John David Van Horn, the father of the David Van Horn, who owns the grocery store at the corner of Seventh street and Broadway. This hostelry soon went out of business. The other was just a few doors west, called the "Brick Hotel" kept by James Richardson, commonly known as "Jimmie" Richardson.

## City Hotel a Large Place.

In the memory of Judge Gillespie, the "Brick Hotel" was managed by "Dick" Leonard, Lishlighter and Bennett, and was then purchased from Richardson by William B. Quisenberry.

The City Hotel as described by Mr. Gillespie, was a large frame building—the largest tavern in Missouri at that time outside of St. Louis—sitting in the middle of a lot a block deep extending back to Ninth street. After the death of Mr. Selbie, which occurred a short time after Mr. Mattocks came here, his widow took charge of the tavern and ran it for quite a number of years with the aid of a large number of slaves. In nearly all the taverns at that time, according to Judge Gillespie, the work was done by slaves or by negroes that had been recently freed.

## Incident of a Negro Festival.

In a slight deviation from the history of hotels, Judge Gillespie told of an incident at a negro festival held on Guitard street early in 1864. Lewis Selbie was one of the waiters in the City Hotel, sharing the waiting work with another negro, named Abe. Lewis Gordon was a powerful black

man of a very responsible nature and had been appointed marshal for the festival. Lewis Selbie, said Mr. Gillespie got drunk. Gordon, in his official capacity, remonstrated with him and was hit on the head with a brickbat that Selbie pulled from his pocket. Gordon nearly lost his life and the rest of his life he had a large dent in the top of his head to remember the occasion. Selbie left town hastily that night and was never seen here again. Several years later, said Judge Gillespie, he saw Lewis in the role of a porter on the Great Northern Railway.

Returning to the Columbia's hotel history, the judge described the location of the City Hotel more exactly. The hotel building was on the south side of the lot with a large flower garden on the south, while back, where the W. B. Nowell Grocery now stands, was a small barn belonging to the property where the travelers' horses were stabled and attended by the hostler who invariably was to be found in the tavern of that day.

## Other Columbia Hotels.

What was known as the "Brick Hotel" passed from the hands of Quisenberry to a man by the name of Hume and then to a Mr. Bush, from whom H. C. Schwabe, father of John Jim and Henry Schwabe, purchased it.

The Gentry Hotel, built by Colonel Richard Gentry, grandfather of North Todd Gentry, was erected some time in the 60's, and was a typical hotel of the time. It was a brick structure with the usual small window panes. This hotel stood where the Hayden Building now is.

The name of Powers was one that was famous in the old days as being connected with taverns. Just west of where the Post Office now stands, Tom Powers owned a cabinet shop.

He reared a boy named John Baker as his son and Baker and the neighbor boys, said Judge Gillespie, used to crawl into the coffins that Mr. Powers had completed and go to sleep. Mr. Powers died in the 70's and his widow and Miss Lizzie Powers kept a boarding house that became very popular and which became known as the Powers House.

The name once established in connection with the tavern was such a valuable asset that it was never changed with the change of owners and even when it was moved to the corner of Tenth and Walnut streets by the last owner, F. W. Poor, it was still known as the Powers House. This hotel burned in 1912.

Later came the Gordon Hotel, at present used by the University for the domestic science department and the present Athens hotel. The present Central Hotel was one time the residence of William Jewell.

## Van Horn Tavern Popular.

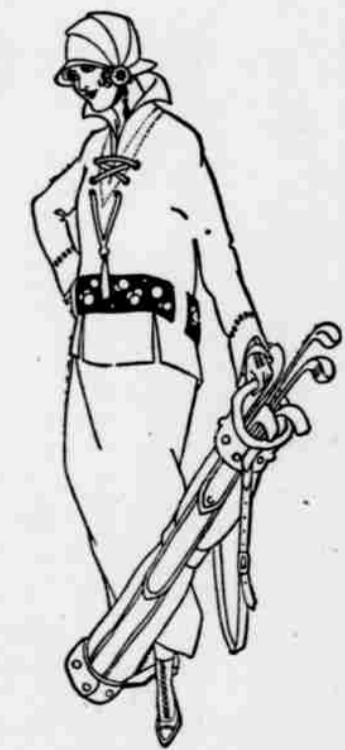
A tavern just outside of Columbia that attained a great reputation with travelers was the old Van Horn Tavern, five miles west of Columbia on the Rocheport road. It occupied the place which is now the property of Dr. Lloyd Simpson. The old tavern is still there, north of the Simpson home and is used as a barn.

All the taverns of the day were similar in appearance; a large hallway generally opened into a reception room with a big, old-fashioned fireplace furnishing the chief attraction. Here the bottle was set out. On first arriving at the hostelry, the visitor's horse would be taken by the hostler and attended as carefully in the stable as the traveler's needs were attended within the tavern. After the traveler had been warned, both externally and internally at the fireplace, the call for supper was given and the guests would pass into the large dining room to get a good meal cooked in the southern style. The cook and waiters were slaves.

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